



Commonwealth of Kentucky  
Office of the Governor

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**Governor Beshear's New Year's Resolution:**  
**The Commonwealth begins its *Journey to Wellness***

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (December 31, 2008)**—As part of the state's new wellness program kick-off, Gov. Beshear and his teammates have joined other states in the Virgin HealthMiles Capitol Steps Challenge to raise obesity awareness across the country.

"A new year is a time for new opportunities," said Gov. Steve Beshear. "Making Kentucky a healthy and happy place to live and work is something we all should strive for each and every year."

To show support for the commonwealth's commitment to wellness, beginning January 1, 2009, Gov. Beshear and members of his team will compete in a two-week *Virgin Capitol Steps Challenge*. During this challenge the Kentucky team will go head-to-head with other governors and their teams by tracking daily activity levels. At the end of the challenge, Virgin HealthMiles will declare the state team with the highest average steps per person as the "Most Active Governor's Team" in the nation. Virgin CEO Sir Richard Branson will make a \$50,000 donation to the winning state's childhood obesity program.

The commonwealth's *Journey to Wellness* program supports state employees with weight management programs, health coaching, tobacco cessation, a *Know Your Numbers* campaign, walking clubs, a statewide weight loss competition and preventive care programs. The Personnel Cabinet and its 230 employees began the pilot wellness program in June 2008.

“During the pilot, I was inspired by the great folks in our cabinet who took charge of their own wellness,” said Personnel Cabinet Deputy Secretary Tim Longmeyer. “I started to address my own personal wellness and the changes I have made will help me lead a healthier life.”

“I was really inspired by the tremendous support the leaders showed for employee’s health” said Alexa Perry, a Personnel Cabinet employee. “A group of co-workers and I decided to sign-up as a team during the cabinet’s weight loss competition and at the end of the 12 weeks, I was named the winner of the cabinet’s first biggest loser competition.”

The *Journey to Wellness* will begin for all state employees in 2009 with a *Know Your Numbers Campaign*. This phase of the program will offer employees the opportunity to attend cabinet-sponsored health fairs, where employees can get to know their blood sugar, cholesterol and blood pressure numbers.

“In order to begin a wellness program, it is critical to first be aware of where and how to start,” said Stephanie Marshall, state wellness director. “In many cases, chronic diseases can be prevented if people are aware of their risks and are willing to make proper lifestyle changes.”

On Oct. 2, 2008, Gov. Beshear, Personnel Sec. Nikki Jackson and Virgin HealthMiles announced that Kentucky is the first state in the nation to offer the Virgin HealthMiles program to state employees and other members of the Kentucky Employees Health Plan (KEHP). Personnel Cabinet employees, insurance coordinators and other executive staff participated in a three-month Virgin HealthMiles pilot program.

These participants were provided a *GoZone*, a pedometer that allowed them to track their daily steps and other physical activity and to upload their data to their own personal *LifeZone* tracking program. The program provides a variety of challenges and monthly sweepstakes for cash prizes, as well as opportunities to redeem cash they’ve earned and won on their personal *LifeZone* Web site. The pilot program has resulted in over \$1,000 in cash prizes, generated from health insurance premiums.

“I wanted to participate in the program because it offered an innovative and different approach to workplace wellness,” said Jamie Allen, a Personnel Cabinet employee. “I’ve challenged myself to walk approximately 7,000 steps per day. Each day I met my goal, I was entered into the HealthMiles sweepstakes. To my surprise, I was one of five winners chosen in the November drawing for \$100.

For more information about the commonwealth’s *Journey to Wellness*, visit <http://www.personnel.ky.gov/>. For more information about the Capitol Steps Challenge, visit [www.virginhealthmiles.com/capitolstepschallenge](http://www.virginhealthmiles.com/capitolstepschallenge).

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